

6. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the scaffold protein has a level of amino acid identity with the naturally occurring allergen of between 20 and 60 %.
7. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the protein variant compared to the naturally occurring allergen has a decreased binding capacity with respect to antibodies specific to the naturally occurring allergen.
8. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the said binding capacity is increased to at least 10%, of the antibody binding capacity of the natural allergen.
9. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the primary mutations is a substitution.
10. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the introduction of at least one of the primary mutations is a deletion and/or an addition.
11. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein variant deviates less than 30% compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen.
12. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein all primary mutations are located within a surface region having an area of about 600-900 Å².
13. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the primary mutations comprise mutation of surface-exposed amino acids.
14. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 13, wherein the primary amino acid residues to be mutated have a solvent accessibility of above 20 %.
15. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein one or more of the mutations are carried out by site-directed mutagenesis.

16. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein one or more of the mutations are carried out by DNA shuffling.

17. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1 obtained by gene library methods.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) A protein variant with the ability to induce a protective immune response to a naturally occurring allergen, obtainable by a method comprising the steps of:

- selecting a scaffold protein, said scaffold protein having a three-dimensional folding pattern that is structurally similar to that of the naturally occurring allergen,
- introducing two or more primary mutations, that are spaced by at least one non-mutated amino acid residue, into the scaffold protein, each primary mutation introducing into the scaffold protein at least one amino acid residue identical or homologous to the corresponding amino acid residue or residues in the naturally occurring allergen, and
- the protein variant having, compared to the scaffold protein, an increased affinity and/or binding capacity to IgE antibodies that are specific to the naturally occurring protein.

20. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 1, wherein the naturally occurring allergen is an inhalation allergen.

21. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 20, wherein the naturally occurring allergen is a pollen allergen.

22. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 21, wherein the naturally occurring allergen is a pollen allergen originating from the taxonomic order of *Fagales*, *Oleales* or *Pinales*.

23. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 22, wherein the naturally occurring allergen is *Bet v 1*.

24. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 23, wherein the scaffold protein is *Mal d 1*.

25. (Currently amended) A protein variant according to claim 24, wherein the *Mal d 1* scaffold is *Mal d 1 2620* having Accession No. AJ488060 and wherein at least two primary mutations are selected from the group consisting of: (E12V, E12I, E12M, E12L), P16A, (H40S, H40T), I43N, L44I, D47N, G65K, K70R, (E76H, E76R, E76K, ~~Q76H~~ E76Q), S107T, G108P, +109D, S110G, E129A, K152L, (P154S, P154T), P155S and optionally one or more secondary mutations are selected from the group consisting of: N28X, preferably N28T, K32X, preferably K32Q, E45S, E96X, +159X.

26. (Previously presented) A protein variant (r*Mal d 1* (2781)) according to claim 24 comprising the sequence defined in SEQ ID NO 2.

27. (Previously presented) A protein variant (r*Mal d 1* (2762)) according to claim 24 comprising the sequence as defined in SEQ ID NO 3.

28. (Currently amended) A protein variant according to claim 24 wherein the *Mal d 1* scaffold is *Mal d 1 2620* having Accession No. AJ488060 and wherein the variant ~~that~~ comprises at least two primary mutations selected from the group consisting of: (E12V, E12I, E12M, E12L), (H40S, H40T), (E76H, E76R, E76K), E129A, (P154S, P154T), and optionally one or more secondary mutations selected from the group consisting of: E8X, N28X, K32X, E96X, +159X.

29. (Original) A protein variant according to claim 23 wherein the scaffold protein of *Bet v 1* is *Dau c 1*.

30. (Currently amended) A protein variant according to claim 29, wherein the *Dau c 1* scaffold protein is Accession No. T14325 and wherein at least two primary mutations are selected from the group consisting of: (S12V, S12L, S12I, S12M), S14P, E16A, P105A, A107P, (A148S, A148T), (I151L, I151V, I151M), (N153H, N153K, N153R), (+154S, +154T), (+155D, +155E), +156A, (+157Y, +157F), (+158N, +158Q), (K39S, K39T), (K44E, K44D), (V52I, V52M,

to at least one amino acid residue present in the corresponding position in the natural occurring allergen, and

- the protein variant has, compared to the scaffold protein, an increased affinity and/or binding capacity to IgE antibodies that are specific to the naturally occurring protein.

53. (Currently amended) A recombinant protein variant with the ability to modulate an immune response to a naturally occurring allergen, wherein

- the protein variant is a variant of a scaffold protein, said scaffold protein has a three-dimensional folding pattern that is similar to that of the naturally occurring allergen,
- the scaffold protein having a level of sequence identity with the naturally occurring allergen of between 30 and 50 %,
- the protein variant compared to the scaffold protein comprises at least ~~one~~ two or more primary mutations spaced by at least one non-mutated amino acid residue, each primary mutation introducing into the scaffold protein at least one amino acid residue identical or homologous to at least one amino acid residue present in the corresponding position in the natural occurring allergen, and
- the protein variant has, compared to the scaffold protein, an increased affinity and/or binding capacity to IgE antibodies that are specific to the naturally occurring.

54. (Currently amended) A recombinant protein variant with the ability to modulate an immune response to a naturally occurring allergen, wherein

- the protein variant is a variant of a scaffold protein, said scaffold protein has a three-dimensional folding pattern that is similar to that of a naturally occurring allergen,
- the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein variant deviates less than 30%-compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen,

76. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 5 comprising 2 to 40 primary mutations.

77. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 5 comprising 3 to 25 primary mutations.

78. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 5 comprising 4 to 15 primary mutations.

79. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 5 comprising 5 to 12 primary mutations.

80. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 6, wherein the scaffold protein has a level of amino acid identity with the naturally occurring allergen of between 30 and 50 %.

81. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 8, wherein the said binding capacity is increased to at least 50% of the antibody binding capacity of the natural allergen.

82. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 8, wherein the said binding capacity is increased to at least 100% of the antibody binding capacity of the natural allergen.

83. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 11, wherein the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein variant deviates less than 20% compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen.

84. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 11, wherein the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein variant deviates less than 10% compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen.

85. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 14, wherein the primary amino acid residues to be mutated have a solvent accessibility of above 30 %.

86. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 14, wherein the primary amino acid residues to be mutated have a solvent accessibility of above 40 %.

87. (Previously presented) A protein variant according to claim 14, wherein the primary amino acid residues to be mutated have a solvent accessibility of above 50 %.

88. (Previously presented) A recombinant protein variant according to claim 54, wherein the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein deviates less than 20% compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen.

89. (Previously presented) A recombinant protein variant according to claim 54, wherein the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the protein deviates less than 10% compared to the deconvoluted CD-spectra of the naturally occurring allergen.

90. (Previously presented) A composition according to claim 57 comprising 3 to 10 different protein variants.

91. (Previously presented) A composition according to claim 57 comprising 4 to 8 different protein variants.

92. (Previously presented) A composition according to claim 57 comprising 5 to 7 different protein variants.